DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 976 CS 013 753

AUTHOR	Stenner, A. Jackson
TITLE	Instructional Uses of the Lexile Framework.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	7p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Readability Formulas; Reading Ability; *Reading Diagnosis; *Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Material Selection; *Reading Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Lexile Scale of Reading; Reading Fluency

ABSTRACT

The Lexile Framework provides teachers with tools to help them link the results of reading assessment with subsequent instruction, focuses on appropriate-level curriculum for readers at all educational levels, and is designed to be flexible enough to use alongside any type of reading program. Suggested areas for application of this system include: (1) monitoring reading program goals; (2) making decisions about reading programs; (3) communicating with parents to include them in education; (4) helping students set appropriate learning goals; (5) challenging the best readers; (6) improving students' reading fluency; (7) teaching learning strategies by controlling comprehension match; and (8) targeting instruction to students' abilities. Contains 5 references. (EF)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 435 976

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
A Jackson Stenner
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

INSTRUCTIONAL USES OF THE LEXILE FRAMEWORK

A. Jackson Stenner
MetaMetrics, Inc.

The Lexile Framework provides teachers with tools to help them link the results of assessment with subsequent instruction. The Early Learning Inventory provides a tool for monitoring progress of students at any time during the school year. The Pathfinder Reading Lists and Lexile Map are resources that make the information easy to use. Teachers, parents, and students can use the tools provided by the Lexile Framework to plan instruction. When teachers provide parents and students with lists of titles that match the students' Lexile scores, they can then work together to choose appropriate titles that also match the students' interest and background knowledge. The Lexile Framework does not prescribe a reading program, but is a tool that gives educators more control over the variables involved when they design reading instruction. The Lexile Framework yields multiple opportunities for use in a variety of instructional activities. Suggestions for how educators can use the Lexile Framework are described in the following pages. Uses of the Framework are not limited to these suggestions. After becoming familiar with the Lexile Framework, teachers are likely to think of a variety of additional creative ways to use this tool that match students to books that students find challenging but not frustrating.

SUGGESTIONS

Monitor Reading Program Goals

As a student's Lexile measure increases, his reading comprehension ability increases for given literature, and the set of reading materials he can comprehend at 75% accuracy changes. Many school districts are required to write school improvement plans in terms of measurable goals. Schools also write grant applications in which they are required to state how they will monitor progress of the intervention funded by the grant. Schools can use Lexile scores of students to measure the results of interventions designed to improve reading skills. Measurable goals can be clearly stated in terms of Lexile measures.

CS 013 753

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Examples of measurable goals and clearly related strategies for reading intervention programs might include:

> Goal: *At least half of the students will improve reading comprehension abilities by 250L units after one school year of intervention from an intervention your school has chosen.*
>
> Goal: *Students' attitudes about reading will improve after reading 10 books at their 75% comprehension level every quarter.*

These examples of goals emphasize the fact that the Lexile Framework is not an intervention, but a tool to help educators plan instruction and measure the success of that instruction.

Make Decisions About Reading Programs

The Lexile Framework does not supplant any existing reading programs. Reading programs, such as Reading Recovery, Accelerated Reader, and Hooked on Phonics target specific groups of students. The Lexile Framework can be used with any of these programs as a tool for monitoring progress, making instructional choices, and communicating with parents.

After students exit targeted reading programs like these, tools from the Framework can be used to make decisions about where to place a student and how to help the student make the transition to a different reading program. For example, a common complaint of the Reading Recovery Program is that once students exit the program and are reading on grade-level according to Reading Recovery measures, they subsequently encounter different instructional approaches in their second grade classroom and may fail to continue making progress (Shanahan & Barr, 1995). One specific problem that has been acknowledged is that following Reading Recovery students are assigned to lower reading levels than were indicated following their discontinuation of services, and thus are given materials which may not challenge them on their instructional level (Glynn, Crooks, Bethune, Ballard, & Smith, 1989). This can lead to obvious problems maintaining the positive effects of the Reading Recovery program. If instead both Reading Recovery teachers and regular classroom teachers were using the same metric to determine appropriate reading materials for students (at least at the close of the Reading Recovery intervention), classroom teachers would be able to more accurately select materials for these students rather than underestimating their abilities. While this only partially alleviates the problem of the mismatch between Reading Recovery and the regular classroom, it is a step in the right direction.

The Framework does not impose pedagogical principles on instruction. The analogy can be made with computer software to illustrate the difference between the Lexile Framework, making pedagogical decisions such as choosing whole language versus

phonics for reading instruction, and selecting targeted reading programs. A pedagogical choice, such as the whole language approach, is analogous to a program that may include many different levels, or screens, and activities from which the user can choose. Intervention programs, such as Reading Recovery, are analogous to instructional software targeted to a specific group of students. The Lexile Framework is analogous to tool software, such as a word processor. A word processor can be used to write a document about any topic, limited only by the knowledge and creativity of the user. Good word processors run on a variety of types of computers with different operating systems without affecting the content or formatting of the document. The Lexile Framework was designed to be flexible enough to use alongside any type of reading program, and improve that reading program by making assessment and recommendation of appropriate reading materials easier for teachers, students and parents.

Communicate With Parents Meaningfully to Include Them in Education:
Teachers can make statements to parents such as, "Your child will be able to read with at least 75% comprehension these kinds of materials which are at the next grade level..." Or "Your child will need to be able to move 400-500 Lexiles to prepare for college in the next few years. Here is a list of appropriate titles your child can choose from for reading this summer." Summer Reading Lists are provided for teachers to share with parents. The lists have been constructed using age- and Lexile-appropriate books that students are likely to enjoy reading. Teachers will be able to provide parents with an appropriate reading list, regardless of the reading comprehension level of their child. Pads of reading lists, corresponding with ranges of Lexile scores, are provided so that teachers can immediately begin to work with parents to link this assessment to instruction.

Help Students Set Appropriate Learning Goals:
Students' Lexile levels can be used to identify reading materials which they can comprehend with 75% accuracy. Students can set goals of improving their reading comprehension, and plan clear strategies for reaching those goals, using literature from the appropriate Lexile levels. Students can be re-tested during the school year to monitor their progress toward their goals.

Challenge the Best Readers:
A variety of instructional programs are available for the poorest readers, but few resources are available to help teachers challenge their best readers. The Lexile measurement links reading comprehension levels to reading material for the entire range of reading abilities, and will help you identify age-appropriate reading material to challenge your best readers. Studies have shown that students who succeed in school without being challenged, often develop poor work habits and unrealistic expectations of effortless success as adults. Therefore, even though these problems are not likely to show until after school age, providing appropriate-level curriculum to the best students may be as important as it is with the poorest reading students.

Improve Students' Reading Fluency:

Educational researchers have found that students who spend a minimum of three hours a week reading at their own level for their own purposes develop reading fluency which leads to improved mastery. Not surprisingly, researchers have also found that students who read age-appropriate materials with a high level of comprehension also learn to enjoy reading. The Lexile Map, Lexile Analyzer, Lexile Framework and the Pathfinder Reading Lists enable teachers to provide students with age-appropriate reading material that they will comprehend.

Teach Learning Strategies by Controlling Comprehension Match

The Lexile Framework permits the teacher to target readers with challenging text and to systematically off-target students when the teacher wants fluency and automaticity (i.e., reader measure well above text measure) or wants to teach strategies for attacking "hard" text (i.e., reader measure is exceeded by text measure). For example, metacognitive ability has been well-documented to play an important role in reading comprehension performance (see for example Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). Once teachers know the kinds of texts that would be challenging for a group of readers, they can systematically target instruction which will allow students to encounter difficult text in a controlled fashion. The teacher can model appropriate learning strategies for students, such as rereading or rephrasing text in one's own words, so that students can then learn what to do when comprehension breaks down. Then students can practice these metacognitive strategies on selected text while the teacher monitors their progress.

Targeting Instruction to Students' Abilities

To encourage optimal progress with the use of any reading materials, teachers need to be aware of the difficulty level of the text relative to a child's reading level. A text that is too difficult, then, not only serves to undermine a child's confidence, but will also diminish learning itself. A text that is too easy fosters bad work habits and unrealistic expectations which will undermine the later success of the best students.

Limitations of the Lexile Framework

Just as variables other than temperature affect comfort, variables other than semantic and syntactic complexity affect reading comprehension ability. A student's personal interests and background knowledge are known to affect comprehension. People do not dismiss the importance of the information communicated by temperature simply because temperature alone does not communicate comfort level of an environment. Similarly, the information communicated by the Lexile Framework is valuable, even though other information also enhances instructional decisions. In fact, the meaningful communication that is possible when test results are linked to instruction provides the opportunity for parents and students to give input regarding interests and background knowledge.

Another limitation of Lexile measurement is that it is valid for continuous prose, and does not fit poetry or other non-continuous prose, such as recipes, menus, or shopping lists. Also, some books are written at a level that does not match the probable level of the intended audience. The Velveteen Rabbit is an example of such a book. For this type of book, the Lexile measure of a book may not be helpful when trying to target materials to children with corresponding Lexile scores.

SUMMARY

The Lexile Framework is comprised of tools and resources that educators can use to plan instruction that correctly targets students. The Lexile Framework components do not replace existing reading programs and they do not prescribe any educational pedagogy. They are general tools that quantify difficulty of reading materials compared with the ability levels of students, much in the same way that experienced teachers already do when they are familiar with the materials and know the students well. Teachers can use the Framework the same way that they use their professional knowledge to make instructional decisions. The Framework will help them do it sooner in the year, even if they aren't familiar with reading material, and will provide a way to communicate this knowledge to other audiences such as parents. These tools present a standard way for documenting and communicating that knowledge.

References

Paris, S. G., Wasik, B. A., & Turner, J. C. (1991). The development of strategic readers. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research, (Volume II)*. New York: Longman.

Shanahan, T., & Barr, R. (1995). Reading Recovery: An independent evaluation of the effects of an early instructional intervention for at-risk learners. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30 (4), pp. 958-996.

Glynn, T., Crooks, T., Bethune, N., Ballard, K., & Smith, J. (1989). *Reading Recovery in context.* Wellington, New Zealand Department of Education.

Winograd, P. (1994). Developing alternative assessments: Six problems worth solving. *The Reading Teacher,* 47 (5), 420-423.

Farr, R. (1992). Putting it all together: Solving the reading assessment puzzle. *The Reading Teacher*, 46 (1), 26-37.